

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 00008 051838Z

45

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 OMB-01

EB-07 TRSE-00 AID-05 /074 W
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R 022215Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8728G
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 0008

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, NU

SUBJECT: STATE OF SIEGE MAY BE LIFTED SOON

1. CAPT. ANASTASIO SOMOZA PORTOCARRERO (ELDEST SON OF PRESIDENT SOMOZA) TOLD DEFATT AND OTHER AMERICAN OFFICERS AT USMILGP OFFICES DEC. 31, THAT HE ANTICIPATED THAT HIS FATHER WOULD LIFT STATE OF SIEGE WITHIN NEXT 10 DAYS. CAPT. SOMOZA EXPLAINED THAT PUBLIC ORDER SITUATION CENTERING AROUND TERRORIST/GUERRILLA FSLN HAD EASED AND GON WAS SENSITIVE TO ADVERSE PUBLICITY ABROAD INCURRED BY MAINTENANCE OF PRESS CENSORSHIP. HE ADDED THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD BEEN IN FAVOR OF TERMINATING STATE OF SIEGE FOR SOME TIME.

2. COMMENT: CAPT. SOMOZA IS AS RELIABLE A SOURCE AS THERE IS ON WHAT'S ON HIS FATHER'S MIND AND THE LIFTING OF THE STATE OF SIEGE, AS HE PREDICTS, SEEMS QUITE PROBABLE. SOMOZA DID NOT CHOOSE TO GIVE HIS TRADITIONAL NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE TO THE NATION ON DECEMBER 31 AND IT MAY HAVE BEEN DELAYED A FEW DAYS IN ORDER TO CONTAIN THIS ANNOUNCE-
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PAGE 02 MANAGU 00008 051838Z

MENT.

3. WHETHER OR NOT TO EXTEND THE STATE OF SIEGE DESPITE THE LACK OF PUBLIC ORDER JUSTIFICATION APPARENTLY HAS BEEN HOTLY DEBATED AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS. MINEDUCATION LEANDRO MARIN EXPATIATED AT LENGTH ON THE SUBJECT AT A RECENT EMBASSY DINNER ATTEMPTING TO JUSTIFY ITS CONTINUATION INTO PERPETUITY. BUT HE WAS SHARPLY REBUKED BY PRESIDENCY SECRETARY CARLOS DUBON, WHO LATER TOLD EMBOFF THAT CERTAIN MINISTERS (OBVIOUSLY INCLUDING MARIN) AND OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS WERE LOBBYING STRONGLY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF CENSORSHIP AS A MEANS TO COVER THEIR OWN MISFEASANCE. SOMOZA, HE REVEALED, SEEMED TO ENJOY GOVERNING WITH CENSORSHIP, BUT HE WAS ALSO WELL AWARE OF ITS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE ASPECTS AND DUBON THOUGHT THAT LIFTING OF THE STATE OF SIEGE WOULD BE ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.

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